Minutes of the Committee on State, Federal and Regional Government December 2, 2013

The Committee on State, Federal and Regional Government met on Monday, December 2 at 7:00 PM in the Philip Pane Hearing Room at Town Hall to discuss airplane noise in Watertown attributed to Massport/Logan Airport and Federal Aviation Administrations' (FAA) changes to Runway 33L.

Attending the meeting were: Councilor Angeline Kounelis, Committee Chair, Councilor Susan Falkoff, Committee Vice Chair, Councilor Tony Palomba, Committee Secretary, Councilor Cecilia Lenk, State Senator Will Brownsberger, Anne Landry, Senator Brownsberger's Policy Advisor, and State Representative Jonathan Hecht. Nearly 30 residents from Watertown attended the meeting. The list of those attending is attached.

Councilor Kounelis convened the meeting at 7:08 by introducing the members of the Committee and the elected officials and stating that the purpose of the meeting was to determine the impact of the airplane noise on Watertown residences and what could be done to address the problem. She noted that this meeting was only the first step in the process. Below is a summary of key points made during the extensive discussion that followed:

- 1) The origin of this concern is the creation of a GPS-based remote navigation system (RNAV) for Runway 33L which makes the runway a "super highway" for as many as 250 planes. When planes use Runway 33L they fly over a Watertown as well as adjacent and nearby communities, including Belmont, Cambridge, Arlington and Winchester. The noise level from planes flying over Watertown, often so low that residents can see the pilot, has been recorded as high as 70 decimals.
- 2) The airplane noise has a direct impact on the quality of life for many residents of Watertown. It interrupts sleep for parents and children, disrupts family and individual recreational activities, and effects the productive of those who work at home. The airplane noise can occur at any time in the day and is not limited to a particular area of Watertown. Depending on the number of planes assigned to runway 33L, planes can fly over an area as often as every two minutes.
- 3) Many residents have taken steps to register their concerns by calling the noise complaint line and investigating the noise abatement program. However there was a general sentiment that officials at Logan Airport and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have been unresponsive. There is a Logan Airport Community Advisory Committee (CAC) that collaborates with the FFA and Massport to provide input into the Boston Logan Airport Noise Study (BLANS) and includes representatives from communities (e.g. Belmont and Arlington) that are affected by airplane noise.

4) A number of suggestion to addressed the issue were offered including, continue to call the noise complaint line, work with other communities affected, involve our Congressional representatives, arrange a meeting with the FFA, and have Watertown represented on the CAC.

The following motions were discussed by the members of the Committee at the conclusion of the comments from those attending.

1) The Committee recommends that the Town Manager determine the number of representatives Watertown can have on the Logan Airport Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and then appoint the maximum number of individuals to the CAC through an application process presently used for appointees to other committees and advisory boards.

Approved 3 - 0

2) The Committee recommends that the Town Manager involve the Health Department in addressing the issue of airplane noise attributed to Massport/Logan Airport and FAA changes to Runway 33L and the effects of this noise on the quality of life for the residents of Watertown.

Approved 3 - 0

3) The Committee recommends that the Town Council send a letter to State Senator Brownsberger, State Representative Hecht and State Representative Lawn requesting that they continue to research the issue of airplane noise attributed to Massport/Logan Airport and FAA changes to Runway 33L and advice the Town Council and the Town Manager on how best to address the issue.

Approved 3 - 0

4) The Subcommittee recommends that the Town Council send a letter to Watertown's representatives in Congress requesting that they arrange a public meeting with representatives of the Federal Aviation Administration to discuss the issue of airplane noise attributed to Massport/Logan Airport and FAA changes to Runway 33L and the effects of this noise on the quality of life for the residents of Watertown, and that the letter be copied to Watertown's State Senator and Representatives and the appropriate officials at Logan Airport and Massport.

Approved 3 - 0

The minutes were prepared by Councilor Palomba.

12/02/13, MONDAY, THILIP TANE LOWER HEARING ROOM, WATERTOWN ADMIN. KLAG COMM. STATE, PEDERAL + REGIONAL GOVT. RES AIRPLANE NOISE

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27 LLOYD AD.

BOB ERICKSON (DID NOT SIGN-IN)

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elizapetrowagmail.com
Snyes@verizon.net
BOBFRICKOWERCW.COM
mojohannet@yahoo.com
Larsenleif@Mac.com
Larsenleif@Mac.com
rjz@alum.mit.edy
mko26@yahoo.com
hoov500@conacaot.net
ludwig_susan@hotmail.com
eparsons02472@gmail.com